



## **Connie's Story:**

Connie was raised by her Grandmother. Space was tight with thirteen people in the four-bedroom home. When Connie was 17, her Grandmother passed away. Because Connie didn't get along with her other family members, she left home.

Connie eventually joined the Job Corps where she finished her GED. This is also where she became interested in cooking and in seamanship.

After Job Corps, Connie bounced from house to house, couch to couch, never having a permanent place to stay. Then Connie heard about Boys & Girls Aid's Safe Place for Youth Shelter. After contacting the program, she was set-up with a host parent, where she finally had a place to call home.

Eventually, Connie transferred into the Transitional Living Program (TLP) at Boys & Girls Aid. With the help of her counselor she was

admitted to The Oregon Culinary Institute and moved into her own apartment. Months of 5:30 a.m. mornings, studying, and hard work led to a degree from the culinary institute for Connie. She now has a fulltime job, with benefits, as a pantry chef at Portland State University.

Connie plans to continue monitoring her budget, saving money, and paying off her student loans. She also still aims to one day become a cruise ship chef.

"If you can aspire to be it, TLP can help you with it," says Connie.